



The ARM Statement

ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

Draft Theses for Principles of Unity

"Arm Statement" September 1975 (revised March 1977)

1 THE TASK OF REVOLUTIONARIES IS TO MAKE THE REVOLUTION. THE TASK OF REVOLUTIONARIES IN THE UNITED STATES IS TO MAKE THE REVOLUTION HERE.

Nobody else can do it for us; and it is for ourselves that we make the revolution -- all of us, as comrades and equals, together.

2 THERE HAS BEEN NO SUCCESSFUL WORKING CLASS REVOLUTION IN ANY ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL COUNTRY.

The nearest thing, in recent years, have been the unsuccessful attempts of 1968, in France and Czechoslovakia.

3 THE SUCCESSFUL COMMUNIST PARTY-LED REVOLUTIONS OF THE 20TH CENTURY, BEGINNING WITH THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1917, HAVE ALL OCCURRED IN UNDERDEVELOPED AND/OR COLONIAL COUNTRIES.

The strategy and tactics of those revolutions, the structure of the Communist parties, and the development of state power after those revolutions all reflect that fact. It is no accident that a communist movement modeled after and dominated by the Russian example, has been uniformly unsuccessful in making the revolution in an advanced industrial society. In those advanced industrial countries, like France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and -- by now -- Russia, where Communist parties hold strong positions of power, whether in the government or, supposedly, in the opposition, they have played not a revolutionary role, but usually a conservative, or at most reformist, role, and often a clearly counterrevolutionary one.

4

COMMUNISM -- FROM EACH ACCORDING TO THEIR ABILITY, TO EACH ACCORDING TO THEIR NEED -- IS NOT POSSIBLE UNDER CONDITIONS OF SCARCITY. IT IS ONLY POSSIBLE AFTER THE PRODUCTIVE FORCES HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED TO THE DEGREE WHERE IMPORTANT GENUINE NEEDS CAN IN FACT BE MET.

Scarcity and the need for capital development create and continually recreate inequality, privilege, exploitation, and coercion. The great historical task of the revolutionary liberation struggles in the underdeveloped world is that development of the productive forces which in the West was carried out by capitalism and the bourgeois revolution. In the era of imperialism, that task can no longer be carried out by the national bourgeoisie or in a "free enterprise" framework. The economic and state forms established by the Communist Party-led revolutions do not come after capitalism, but essentially instead of classical capitalism. They initiate a development which, in the case of the Soviet Union, has led not towards communism but towards relations of production and forms of organization increasingly similar to the bureaucratic monopoly capitalism of the United States. Developments in China, in spite of important differences and especially the heroic popular struggles in

These theses are distributed by the Left Bank Collective, to initiate discussion and criticism, and above all to help get it together. A first draft has been circulating in the form of xerox copies for over a year, and we are grateful to the many comrades who have sent us their criticisms and suggestions. Many of these have been incorporated in this second draft. We hope that this version will reach many more people, and we urge groups and individual comrades who are seriously into it to communicate their criticisms and ideas to

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ruling class (remember Chile!) and against the rise of a new repressive force. We support a wide variety of tactics (use your imagination!), including both non-violent direct action as well as sabotage and guerrilla actions as forms of popular struggle against the system. While being conscious of the inherent danger of elitist tendencies arising in clandestine conspiratorial organization, and criticizing and combatting the vanguardism and elitist false consciousness often expressed by existing underground groups, we give critical support to these groups and defend them unconditionally against the repressive onslaught of the state.

II WE ARE A REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT, AND THE TASK OF REVOLUTIONARIES IS TO GET IT TOGETHER.

the cultural revolution, clearly point in the same direction.

5 THE REVOLUTIONARY LIBERATION FIGHTERS IN THE THIRD WORLD ARE OUR COMRADES AND ALLIES IN OUR COMMON STRUGGLE AGAINST THE COMMON ENEMY -- THE U.S. IMPERIALIST RULING CLASS.

Their victories are victories for us, because they weaken the stranglehold of the imperialist economic system, which oppresses us as well as them. In weakening the imperialists' ability to rule, they create the preconditions for our successful revolution; they destroy the myth of the ruling class's invincibility and give us confidence in our ability to overthrow it.* Our resistance, in turn, aids their struggle by weakening the effectiveness and reliability of the imperialist military, technological and administrative machine.

WE ARE BOUND TOGETHER IN COMRADESHIP AND SOLIDARITY.

6 BUT THE TASKS AND PROBLEMS OF OUR REVOLUTION ARE VERY DIFFERENT FROM THEIRS, AND THE STRATEGY, TACTICS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS OF THEIR STRUGGLE DO NOT, IN

**Portugal is an excellent example of third world liberation struggles being the direct cause for the development of a revolutionary situation in the metropolis. But Portugal is itself by no means an advanced industrial country, but an intermediate case of part metropolis, part underdeveloped neo-colony of U.S. imperialism; and the revolution in Portugal, with all its hopeful aspects pointing to the future, was certainly not a clear case of a working class revolution in advanced industrial society. It consisted of many mixed elements, and, at the time of writing, seems to have been successfully contained within the imperialist system.*

GENERAL, FORM MODELS FOR US.

We can and must learn from their experience, as we must learn from the experience of all revolutionary struggles in human history. But the strategy, tactics, and organizational forms of the revolutionary struggle in advanced industrial societies must flow primarily from the conditions of that society and from the experience of their struggles, not from the study of history and not slavishly from the revolutionary struggles of underdeveloped societies -- even if that practice was successful there.

SUPPORT AND SOLIDARITY ARE NOT PRIMARILY A MATTER OF ADMIRATION OR IMITATION. THE GREATEST SERVICE WE CAN RENDER THE PEOPLES OF THE THIRD WORLD IS TO MAKE A REVOLUTION HERE -- IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST. FOR IN FREEING OURSELVES, WE GET OUR IMPERIALIST RULING CLASS OFF THEIR BACKS, AND HOW BETTER CAN WE REPAY THEM FOR THE BLOWS THEY STRIKE TO HELP US BY FREEING THEMSELVES?

7

THE TASK OF OUR REVOLUTION IS TO DESTROY THE ECONOMIC POWER OF THE MONOPOLY CAPITALIST RULING CLASS; TO SMASH ITS POLITICAL SYSTEM OF DOMINATION WITHIN THE METROPOLIS -- THE BOURGEOIS STATE -- AND WITH IT TO DESTROY ALL FORMS OF OPPRESSION AND DOMINATION OF HUMAN BEINGS OVER EACH OTHER. OUR TASK IS TO REPLACE THE CLASS SOCIETY OF DOMINATION OF THE MANY IN THE INTEREST OF THE FEW, BY THE CLASSLESS COMMUNIST SOCIETY OF FREE AND EQUAL HUMAN BEINGS.

The economic precondition for Communism -- the development of the productive forces to the stage where all important genuine needs can potentially be met -- already exists in advanced industrial societies. Our primary task is not the further development of productive forces, or to increase the efficiency or total amount of industrial production. IT IS TO OVERTURN THE CAPITALIST EXPLOITATIVE AND OPPRESSIVE RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION. It is to turn production from profitable waste and profitable engines of destruction to the satisfaction of human

oppressed -- that is, the large majority of us. We support struggles and actions that rock the boat; that disturb the working of the empire and the state; that kick the shims out from under the system and help bring it down; that weaken the ability of the ruling class to govern, and tend to destroy its confidence.

We criticize and oppose forms of struggle and tendencies that would place reliance on the system, tend to institutionalize the "opposition" within the system, or provide careers for "movement leaders" within the system. We oppose tendencies that counteract people's disillusionment and tend to restore their faith in the working of the system, or that tend to encourage leader-worship or passive dependence on a "vanguard" or on "gurus" in the movement.

Thus we support all struggles of third world peoples in the U.S. against the oppressive racist hierarchy of this system; we support the struggle of women and gay people against the sexist authoritarian structure and for personal freedom -- while criticizing and combating tendencies toward cooptation or toward vanguardism and elitism arising in all of these struggles.

We support the struggle of young people against the ageist and sexist patriarchal authority system, and equally the struggle of old and young alike against the oppressive age segregation and the phony youth cult inculcated by the system which degrades people into commodities and tools to be sold, used, discarded and replaced by the shiny new model.

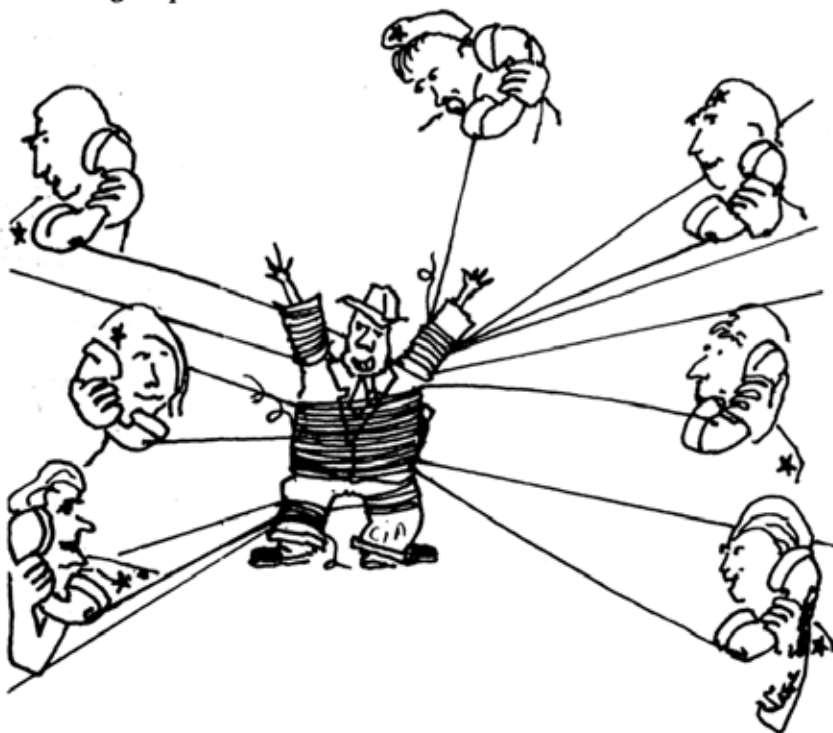
We support the economic and social struggles of poor and working people and oppose their bureaucratic containment within the workings of the system, whether by CIA-controlled labor unions or poverty bureaucracies.

We are all prisoners in this society, but we especially support the struggle for freedom of all those locked down in the overt prisons and "asylums" of the system.

We believe in the people arming ourselves and learning how to use arms as the ultimate defense against the repressive measures of the authoritarian

low from current experience, and from the considerations of points (1) to (9).

Organizationally, we believe that the best form for the present is autonomous small affinity groups and collectives freely communicating with and supporting each other. This seems to give the best chance for initiative and growth, and experimentation, as well as the best defense against repression and infiltration. Gradually, with experience, and as the struggle develops, closer working relations based on equality and mutual respect will develop between these groups.



We believe that both above-ground and underground forms of struggle are needed. In general, we favor forms of direct action of poor and oppressed people that have a liberating effect, both objectively and psychologically; that open up possibilities of initiative and freedom, personal growth and independence from the system; that lead to solidarity and mutual support and increased self-confidence among the

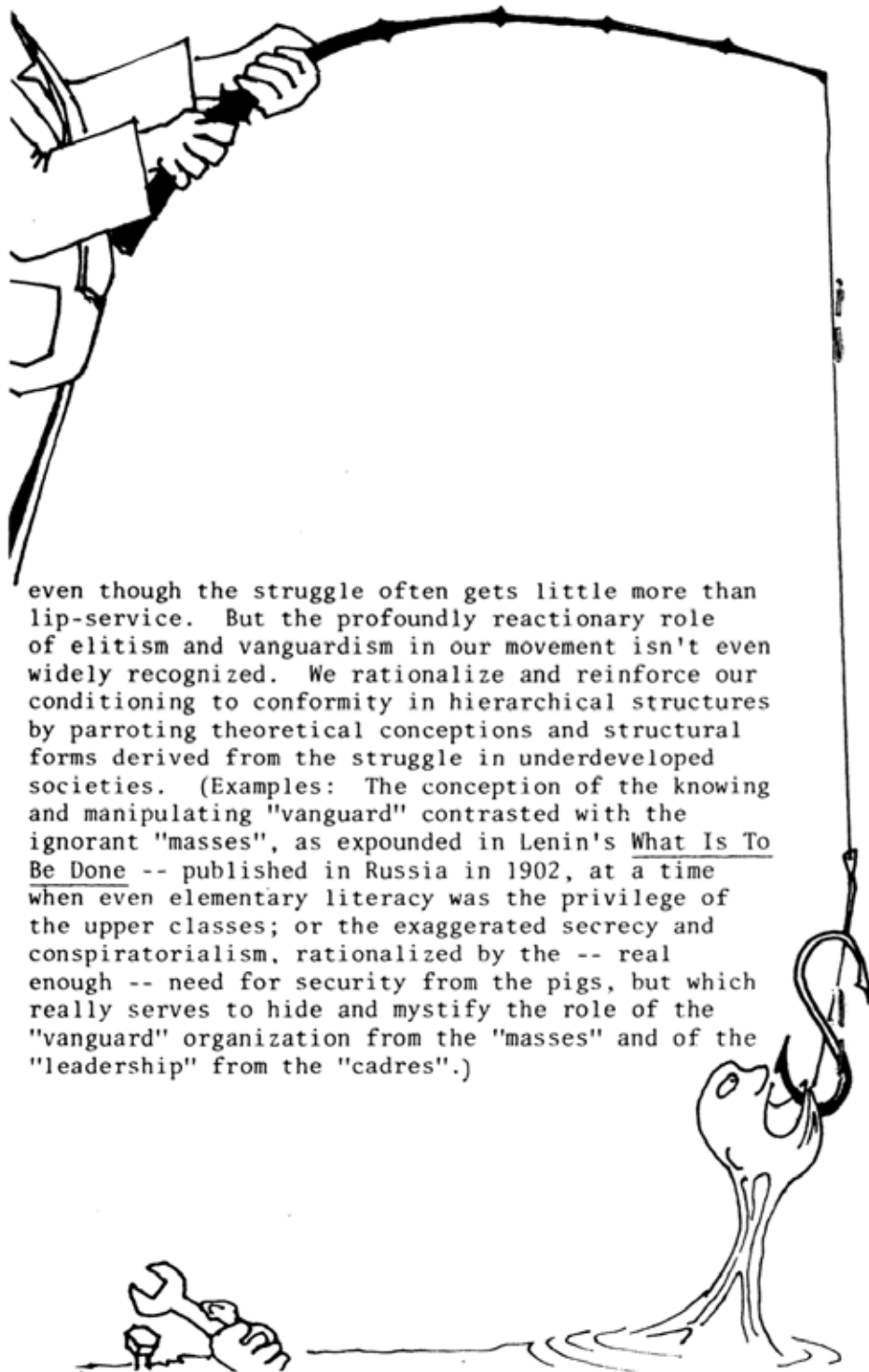
needs. It is to liberate ourselves from slavery to an economic system run wild in the insane pursuit of profit and power for the monopoly capitalist ruling class; to liberate ourselves from the systems of material, physical, and psychological domination, which function to keep us in that state of economic slavery; to liberate ourselves from the dehumanization and alienation of all life and all social relations which result from that system.

OUR REVOLUTION WILL NOT REPLACE ONE SET OF ORGANIZERS, ADMINISTRATORS, RULERS, BY ANOTHER SET ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE SECOND SET IS BETTER EQUIPPED TO RUN THINGS "FOR US", IN OUR INTEREST. THE PROLETARIAT -- WHICH IS THE VAST MAJORITY IN ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY -- WILL RUN THINGS COLLECTIVELY BY OURSELVES, AS EQUALS, AS WELL AS FOR OURSELVES. WORKING CLASS POWER IS THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF THE VAST MAJORITY, NOT THE DICTATORSHIP OF A VANGUARD PARTY, IN THE NAME OF THE WORKING CLASS, OVER THE WORKING CLASS, OR THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OVER THE PARTY, OR THE POLITBUREAU OVER THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, OR THE "LEADER" OVER THE POLITBUREAU.

8

THE SYSTEM OF PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DOMINATION, WHICH FUNCTIONS TO KEEP US IN THE STATE OF ECONOMIC SLAVERY IN THIS SOCIETY, IS HIERARCHY AND AUTHORITARIANISM IN ALL ITS FORMS.

Its main expressions in this society are the racism, sexism, and ageism which oppress and separate us and set us against each other, and the elitism which conditions the vast majority of us to be conformist passive followers of experts, bureaucrats and self-promoted "leaders", or else to "compete" to rise in the hierarchy and become "leaders" or "vanguards" ourselves. The struggle against hierarchy and authoritarianism is both external and internal -- that is, against our oppression by the enemy, and against the conditioning in ourselves and in the movement. Most of us are aware of the need to struggle against the racism and sexism in the movement and in ourselves --



even though the struggle often gets little more than lip-service. But the profoundly reactionary role of elitism and vanguardism in our movement isn't even widely recognized. We rationalize and reinforce our conditioning to conformity in hierarchical structures by parroting theoretical conceptions and structural forms derived from the struggle in underdeveloped societies. (Examples: The conception of the knowing and manipulating "vanguard" contrasted with the ignorant "masses", as expounded in Lenin's What Is To Be Done -- published in Russia in 1902, at a time when even elementary literacy was the privilege of the upper classes; or the exaggerated secrecy and conspiratorialism, rationalized by the -- real enough -- need for security from the pigs, but which really serves to hide and mystify the role of the "vanguard" organization from the "masses" and of the "leadership" from the "cadres".)

9

THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION IN ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY WILL BE PROFOUNDLY EGALITARIAN, ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN, AND LIBERATING IN ITS AIMS AND ITS RESULTS. ONLY A REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT THAT REFLECTS AND EXPRESSES THIS IN ITS STRATEGY, ITS TACTICS, AND ITS ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS, CAN MAKE A REAL CONTRIBUTION TO SUCH A REVOLUTION.

The A.R.M. must function through self-disciplined responsible cooperation between equals, irrespective of racial, sexual, or age divisions, based on comradely respect for people and for differences. We recognize that, in the absence of valid models, no-one has a blueprint of how to make the revolution, and that diversity, initiative and experimentation among serious people respecting and supporting each other are a strength, not a weakness. We also recognize that the development of honest comradely relations as equals, based on mutual responsibility, trust, and respect, is no small task. We are all conditioned to the racist, sexist, ageist and elitist stereotypes, and to the authoritarian pattern of contempt and hatred for other people and for ourselves, which makes us take manipulation, and lying to each other and fucking each other over, as matters of course in relations between people. The struggle to develop and maintain responsibility and respect in relations with people is an ongoing most important part of our internal struggle. Without it the movement is doomed to neurotic ego-tripping fuck-up ineffectuality, or to follow-the-leader mindless authoritarian sectarianism.

10

The revolution is a protracted ongoing process, and we are in its early stages. Organizational forms and forms of struggle will change and develop with experience and experimentation. Right now, all we can say are some principles which seem to us to fol-